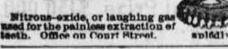


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THE FEAR OF SNAKES.

NYM CRINKLE WRITES A CHAPTER ABOUT THE OPHIDIANS.

Steele Mackaye's Theory of Snake Charming-The Psychie Side of a Serpent's Character-One of Mackaye's Suake Seances-The Danger of Fooling.

Steele Mackaye is the only man that I have ever met who has made a rational study of serpentology. It is true enough that I do not agree with him in all his conclusions, as I will explain presently, but I must acknowledge his accumulation of knowledge and the philosophic spirit with which he has investigated what may be called the mystic side of the ophidian.

Here let me say that I have an antipathy to the serpent-not unusual, but which is utterly beyond the control of my will or reason. I do not think that I am devoid of the quality which passes by the name of physical courage. On more than one occasion I have confronted a dog which I had every reason to believe was rabid and from which other men ran away; but on the sudden appearance of a snake a sensation of dread and weakness overcomes mo that is unaccountable and irresistible. Once, when climbing some rocks with my boy in the Great South Park, we came unexpectedly upon a rattlesnake coiled with his head and rattles in the air about three feet above us. I now know, and I wish to confess it, that for the first time in my life I experienced the partial sensation of fainting. My boy killed the servent unconcernedly, but I was unfitted for the journey for an hour.

This strange fear is, as I have said, by no means uncommon. I have encountered it among all classes of men, and have even observed it among frontiersmen, who had been unable by years of experience in snake infested districts to overcome it. Whether this is a congenial antipathy and the result of inberited prejudices or is self made from early Impressions and subsequent imaginings is an open question.

A PHYSICAL MYSTERY.

Mr. Mackage holds that it is the inherited result of the mysticism that has surrounded the serpent from the time of Moses, and that It can be overcome by a mere exercise of the will and a familiarity with the snake.

Here I take issue with him. I am inclined to believe kat the universal fear and borror inspired by the serpent have a psychic cause not yet explained and that this terror reaches Its maximum in certain organizations quite Independently of their associations and training. No one who has seen a horse trembling throughout his frame and brenking into a cold sweat at an ordinary black snake in the road, or, to take a still better example, no one who has seen a buildog, the most courageous and least sensitive of all the canine tribe, shiver and put his tail between his legs at the sniff of a hurmless garter snake, can have failed to wonder at the mysterious dread which appears to run all through the animal kingdom -or at least all the domesticated part of itwith the single exception, if I am to believe common rural superstition, of the hog.

Most of my readers who have traveled in the southwest are familiar with the repugpractice in the courts of Mason and ad-faffning counties, the Superior Court and light of Appeals. Special attention siven to ting the bead from a fresh killed rattlesmake collections and to Real Estate. Court street, and coiling the decapitated body on the top of a barrel to see the involuntary muscular contractions imitate the striking act of the live serpent. But the remarkable part of this disgusting experiment is, that not one man in ten has sufficient nerve to hold his hand up and let the headless body strike at it.

A FAINTING FIT.

About three years ago I saw a great, brawny man in Bunnell's museum topple over in the crowd. He was carried out, as was then supposed, in a dying condition, and water poured over him in the lobby. When an ambulance arrived he had recovered sufficiently to explain the cause of his fainting fit, and he attributed it to the serpent exhibition made by the woman who put the pythons round her body. I took pains to earn something of his antecedents, and found that he had been a soldier and noted for his bravery and courage.

I could multiply these instances to any extent, but what I want to say is that I never met anybody who had this antipathy more unreasonably developed than myself.

Some ten years ago Steele Mackaye had some literary work to do in which I was a collaborateur, and he invited me to his house in Stamford for a week. Anna Dickinson had told me something about his snake seances, but I had forgotten all about it, and I arrived there in the evening and was couducted to his study. Imagine my horror as I stood at the partly open door, and, looking in, saw my friend seated at a writing table in the middle of the room, having for a companion an eighteen foot South American bos, the body of which was partly on the floor, while the flattened bead, with its little lid ess eyes, lay w thin a foot of the manuscript upon which Mackaye was working.

The effect of this upon me was instantly apparent to Mackaye, who jumped up and began to upbraid me for giving way to what he called an entirely irrational weakness. He appealed to my philosophy, to my will, to my manhood. Pointed out to me that my terror was a childish one, ungrounded in sense, and that the healthy intelligence over-

A SUBTLE, SICKENING ODOR.

No one but myself can know how vain were all these appeals. I distinctly remember that the moment I put my head in that door my sense was attracted by that strange, subtle and sickening odor which emanates from the ophidian, and to which some organizations are so susceptible. Its effect upon me is not unlike that of sulphuretted hydrogen gas, producing sensations of vertigo, accompanied by that illusion of surface coolness which is produced on the gustatory nerves by peppermint.

"I will show you," said Mackaye, "that your fears are unworthy of you, and convince you in five minutes that the serpent, so far from being a malignant, dangerous enemy, is simply an unvolitional spinal system, without a cerebrum, and subject absolutely to rhythm of sound and motion.

He then began a series of Delsartian experfmente with his snake, as I stood shrinkingly at the door with my hand upon the knob. He made sinuous and graceful passes with his his hands, in which his arm imitated the convulsions of a serpent, describing beautiful

and graceful curves that seemed to pass from his shoulder along a flexible humerus to the metacarpal extremities.

The action apparently soothed the reptile, for it simply moved its flattened head in a swaying, sympathetic motion and allowed Mackaye to grasp it gently at the neck sud guide it wherever he pleased.

"You can see," he said, "for yourself that the animal is soothed by rhythmic metion. Now I will prove to you that unrhythmic motion irritates it, and so does unrhythmic

He then began a new series of singularly ungraceful and spasmodic actions with his hand, which were not violent, and the serpent began to raise his head and dart out his black, forked tongue.

AN OLD RATTLESNAKE.

Some months afterwards I saw Mackage go through this same experiment with an old Pennsylvania rattlesnake in a wire cage at what was then the aquarium on Broadway. He thrust his hand in at the little wire cage and did the soothing business again, to the borror of Tode Hamilton and an Indian snake charmer, who were, with myself, the only witnesses. You must remember that the snake was a veteran, and as full of venom as an egg is full of meat. Irritation in his case meant sudden and certain death.

When Mackage had demonstrated his complete power over the animal, he withcrew his arm, closed the wicket and began upon the outside of the cage a quietly irritating system of gestures. In an incredibly short space of time the serpent had thrown himself into his concentric attitude of deflance, his rattle was vibrating and he was a picture of danger that made us all stand back and hold our

But imagine my wretchedness that night in Mackaye's house at Stamford. I was given a luxurious chamber. I knew that my door was locked and satisfied myself before retiring that the eighteen foot boa had not by some inadvertence crawled into my room. felt sure that he was securely boxed and in the cellar. And yet I started out of sleep with an invincible dread.

Every sense fooled me. I heard the slow, dire, inevitable motion of that spinal body upon the newspaper that I had dropped upon the floor. I saw in the shadows the uplifted head and forked tongue. I caught the odor, which sickened me. I felt the touch of the cold, writhing coils. And all this was accompanied by the consciousness that it was nothing but my own imagination.

Well, pride and a feeling of shame at my own childishness or effeminacy made me endeavor to familiarize myself with the reptile during the week that I was in the house. J tried very hard to fight down my instinctive antipathies and get up a personal acquaint ance. I might as well say at once that I utterly failed.

CRUSHED BY A BOA.

Some months afterward I cut from the London papers an account of the sudden and terrible death of a snake exhibitor at Bombay, and took it to Mackaye. This man had been for years performing in public with enormous constrictors, which he coiled round his body. One day, while on the stage of the Bombay theatre, encircled by the folds of a tremendous boa, the audience heard a cry of pain, and the man trith his load of snake staggered and fell over upon the floor. There was a muffled report, as of many bones crack-

At the post mortem he was found to have

"That," I remarked, "is a terrible example of the danger of fooling with the ophidians." "It is," said Mackaye, "a terrible example of the carelessness of exhibitors. It was his own fault."

"Why, he forgot to examine his clothing before he coiled the serpent round his body and something irritated the animal. If they had examined the boa they would have found an abrasion or cut, perhaps caused by a pin. At the sudden irritation he exerted his whole constrictive force, which was capable of crushing an ox."

"Nice dynamic playthings," I remarked, 'steel springs and lightning.' "Yes," said Mackaye, "you have to know

how to handle steel springs and lightning. \ I had a similar experience with my pet." "Similar, do you say?"

"Yes, he was coiled around the wicker chair you used to sit in, and I was writing. The door into the passage on the other side of the room was ajar, and Tabby came lazily in, with her tail straight up in the air. I heard a report like a pistol and the door was slammed suddenly shut. Talk about fractures. I don't think there was a piece of that chair left that was six inches long. He just pulverized it, and shot himself against that door like a thunderbolt. It was the cat, you say! Nonsense, it was a splinter of that chair. I found a cut in his skin an inch and a half

"What did you do with your pet?" "Lost him. It was a confounded shame. left him in a box in the cellar when I went to Boston to lecture, and my men forgot the blankets. My snake was frozen stiff, I could have revived him if I had got back in time, but the boys chopped him up in cord wood lengths and buried him."—Nym Crinkle in New York World.

The Pepper Tree.

Some time before reaching Santa Barbara we began to see the pepper tree-of which we had seen isolated specimens before-in great numbers, and presently miles of bedges composed of this graceful tree met our eyes. The pepper tree is large and tall, with branches drooping after the manner of the weeping willow, only not to the same extent. The foliage is thick, the leaves being long and slender, growing close together and having a very graceful and feathery effect. In the spring they are covered with clusters of tiny tight yellow, creamy blossoms which look as soft and downy as the back of a newly batched chicken and of about the same color, taken as a mass. These disappear and long clusters of small berries gradually ripen and blush to a vivid scarlet in the warm sun, making a wonderfully pretty bit of color, contrasting with the light green leaves in the landscape. In leaf, in bud, in blo-som, in fruit, it is always a beautiful and graceful thing to look upon. As the seasons change it simply changes its dress, the new one seeming loveller than the old; it is never bare and desolate like other trees. The pepper tree is very common in southern California, but its perennial beauty preserves it from the fate of many another common thing .- Cor. Cleve-

DAY OF ATONEMENT.

THE MOST SOLEMN EVENT IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

Prayer and Fasting for Twenty-four Bours-Ancient Sacrificial Ceremonies. Solemn Closing Service-Wearing Veritable Shrouds-A Very Curious Custom.

In this time of materialistic thought the average American can hardly understand, still less can he appreciate, the awe and reverence with which the Day of Atonement is regarded by the Jew. It is the most sacred twenty-four hours in the calendar of the Hebrew. Into the minutes of that day are woven the splendors of his ancient temples, the pomp and ceremonial of the Mosaic rit unl, the sadness of a nation without a home. The Jew was not contemned and a wanderer wien that sacred day was i stituted.

By orthodox and reformed Jews alike this day is held in reverence. Every one of the Hebrew faith will ob erve it by fasting and prayer. The time of this service is the tenth day of the seventh month in the Jewish calendar. The day is significant. It is the tenth day to signify the com-pleteness of the atonement; it is the seventh month because the month closed the festal half of the Mosaic year, and thus, in a sense, formed its Sabbath; it is the tenth day of the month, because, say the wise men, on that day Adam sinned and repented, Abraham was circumcised, and Moses came down from the Mount and found his people worshiping the gelden calf. The day thus set apart is strictly and solemnly kept. On it, and on it alone, is there a fast enjoined. The Jew is expected to "ufflict his soul" on that day, which means fasting in addition to repentance and humiliation,

THE ANCIENT CEREMONIAL

The ancient ritual included a ceremonial of Oriental magnificence. The priests were dressed in pure white linen, signifying simplicity. Two goats were furnished by the people upon which were cast lots-one lot for Jehovah and the other for Azazel, the name of a bad spirit living in the wilderness. One of these goats was killed as a sin offering after the priest had slain a bullock; then followed that singular ceremony of sending the living goat into the wilderness. A man appointed the year before led the goat away into a district from which there was no re-

The idea of this procedure evidently was that the sins which had symbolically been laid upon the goat did not return. The man who had led the goat could not re-enter the camp until he had washed his clothes and himself. The high priest then took off his linen garments, washed himself, put on his usual dress and burned the fut of the other

geat upon the altar.

Since the destruction of Jerusalem the Day of Atonement has not been observed with such imposing ceremonial. But yet it is kept up. In place of the sin offering there is the expiatory prayer, in which there are many beautiful passages. The modern observance of the day consists of a rigorous fast, beginning at sunset and continuing until the next evening at 6 o'clock. Not a drop of water nor a morsel of food can be taken in that time. This observance is binding on every Jew, except those who are too ill to risk the fast. The synagogue services begin about sunset and last several hours. They are resumed the following morning at 6 o'clock and continue until sunset. The services consist of a set ritual of prayers for forgivenness, expressions of contrition and promises of amendment. Selections from the law and prophets are read, and addresses upon the topics of the day are made by the rabbis. The music for the day is pitched in tone of special solemnity. A striking feature of the service is the memorials of the dead, so called, in which not alone the names and virtues of departed members of the congregation are mentioned, but the fact of their departure is used to point a lesson of morality, and their memory employed to incite the pious emulation of those who mourn them. In many congregations very large collections are taken up for benevolent pur-

BOLEMN CLOSING SERVICE.

The closing service, which begins just be-fore sundown, is pitched in a still higher key of solemnity. The synagogue is then crowded to its utmost. Those who have gone out during the day for air-it is very wearisome sitting in a crowded room for twelve hours; besides, the effects of the fast are beginning to be felt-return encouraged by the knowledge that the close of the service is near. The responses are louder. The rabbi ascends the steps of the ark to close its doors, which have been open all day. The whole congregation, standing, repeat the Shemang or Hebrew declaration of faith: "Here, oh, Israel, the Lord our God is one." Then follows the repetition of the people's cry upon Mount Carmel in Elijah's time seven times: "The Lord he is God." The doors of the ark are closed and a single blast is blown upon a ram's horn, which dismisses the congregation. The article used in the service which probably comes the nearest in resemblance to the one used in Jerusalem before the Jew hung his harp upon the willows is this ram's horn. It is just such an instrument as that which Joshua and his band blew upon when the walls of Jericho fell. Some little skill is required to blow it. It emits but one note, and that of a peculiarly weird and mournful

Following the custom established by the riests in the early history of the cult, it has en the habit from time immemorial for the men to wear the veritable shrouds or garments intended to be used at their burial. This practice, however, among the wealthier Jews of this city has fallen into di-use. Among the poorer congregations the white garments are still worn. But rich and poor alike yet cling to the little white cap which is worn on the Day of Atonement.

A very curious ceremony in connection with this day is practiced by strict Jews. On the day previous to the Day of Atonement each man takes a cock and each woman a hen, and swinging it three times around the head they each exclaim; "May this cock (ben) be my atonement! This cock (hr n) shall go to death that I may go into the life of the blessed with all Israel. Amen." The fowls are then killed and given to the poor, or else kept and their value given.

A highly cultured rabbi, when asked this morning if he made any preparations for the

fast by eating a hearty meal, replied there was a time in his experience when he did so, but he had found that such a course was injurious. Now he ests only an ordinary meel. But an aged clothing dealer on Chatham street pursues a different course. He cats all that he can hold and says he suffers no ill effects from so doing.—New York Sun.

STUDENT LIFE IN PARIS.

Some of the Manners and Customs of the Latin Quarter.

Here is the receipt for a Paris student: A high hat which costs about \$2 and is shabby in proportion. A beard, but not like the beards we have at home. It must be cut very short at the sides, generally with a machine, and pointed at the chin. The hair is done in one of three ways, but rarely with any part. 1, cut very short and brushed straight forward a la dynamiter; 2, brushed up on end a la porcupine; 3, allowed to grow very long and thrown back a la Beethoven. These long haired fellows are simply disgusting. They assume the halo of an intellect which they have not got. You can generally tell a student, too, by the black leather case which he invariably carries for paper, books, etc. For writing they all have little square inkstands which possess most marvelous powers of upsetting, and an ordinary pen. A stylograph, price twelve or fifteen francs, would be considered an indication of fabulous wealth. The most striking characteristic, bowever, of a genuine Paris student, particularly one of the medical persuasion, is his free and easy manners. He frequently finds, toward 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, that his brain will not work any longer unless he goes out in the street and howls vigorously, to the immense edification of the neighboring aleepers. Then you will often observe him singing down the Boulevard Saint Michel in the evening, with a female companion on either arm, and indulging in what might be called, by a slight disregard of the truth, a species of singing. Again you may see the young gentleman of studious propensities on top of a billiard table in one of the brasseries, with a cue in one hand and a plate of what they call choucroute in the other, haranguing a crowd of miscellaneous friends upon some important question of the moment. Yes, on the whole you are apt to recognize the student by the delightful sans gene which he displays whenever he appears in public. You think to yourself: "Well, these joking, drinking, jovial, fooling young Frenchmen can's amount to much at their books. They are not serious enough, they waste too much time at cafes and brasseries, they keep too late hours, etc." Wait a moment, my friend. Paris students are not to be judged too hastily. Go into the lecture rooms and the laboratories. Watch these same harum scarum fellows at the dissecting table, or in the great libraries. Talk to them. Find out who they are, etc., and the first thing you know you will discover that these "young fools," as you thought them the other night when you watched them gambling in the Cafe de la Source at 1 o'clock in the morning, know enough about medicine, or chemistry, or something else, to make your head swim. You see they play very hard when they play, and perhaps it's the same when they work. They laugh at the English students here as being "always serious," for the excellent reason that they have not enough esprit to be anything else.-Paris Cor. New York San.

TALES OF GEN. FORREST.

The Rough and Tumble Manners of the

Confederate Cavalry Leader. The following interesting incidents in the army life of Gen. Bedford Forrest were witnessed by an eye witness, and now for the first time published:

In December, 1862, Gen. N. B. Forrest crossed the Tennessee river and made a raid through west Tennessee, which portion of the state was fortified in many places, all of which were strongly garrisoned. making a feint against Jackson (to enable the larger part of his brigade to uninterruptedly capture the small stockades on the railroad) a staff officer galloped up to the general and exclaimed, excitedly;

General, general, the Yankees are coming up in your rear!"

Without a moment's hesitation, in the most judifferent manner imaginable, Forrest replied:

"I don't kere a --- . 'I'll about face an' I'll be in thar rar."

While crossing the Tennessee river (returning from this same raid) his rear was strongly pressed by the Federals. The ferryboats had to be pulled back and forth by hand. The weather was terribly cold and as the men hauled upon the wet ropes their hands would literally freeze to them. Forrest thought those on the east side were working too slowly and crossing over he immediately put every one to work-officers as well as privates.

The colonel who had been left in command on the west side sent his sergeant major across the river with an important message to Forrest. The sergeant found the general hauling on a rope, alternately encouraging and damning every one near him. He ran up to Forrest, and began: General, Col. Woo"

"D-m colonel whoever he is. Ketch hold of this rope and help pull the boat in!"

"But, general, colonel"——
"Don't talk to me. Help pull this boat in, or I'll throw you in the river," shouted For-

"But, general, I'm sent—," began the ser-geant, when Forrest seized him, and with one twist of his muscular arm lifted the messenger clear off his feet, and stood him up in the water waist deep. The sergeant, to save himself as he went over, seized hold of Forrest's coat and pulled the general in with him. Forrest retained his hold of the sergeant, and exclaiming, "Spunky dog, eh!" be soused him under the water and held him there a few seconds; then lifting the sergeant's head above the water long enough for him to catch his breath, he would shove him upper water again, and again bringing

him up would exclaim: .

"Spunky dog, eh!" After immersing the sergeant several times Forrest helped him ashore, when the latter, nalf strangled and coughing, tried to draw his pistol. Forrest gave him two or three slaps on the back to help him expel the water, from his lungs, saying at the same time:

"You d-- little fool, don't you know your pistol' is wet and won't fire?"-Jacksonville News-Herald.